

Dear diary,

There are a lot of things I just flat out do not understand. You would think that this would be something that bothers people more, but it's almost like there's a town wide collusion or just letting "sleeping dogs lie." If the wickars could hold the key to solving cold cases and missing person cases, why hasn't anyone just tried recording them? You would think that something like that falls under the jurisdiction of the Church, if nothing else - why else would you perch an exorcist right on the edges of all of that mess? I can't fathom what drove Anthony to move so close to Tilrose lane. Everyone knows that that stretch of road is so dangerous that it's actually publically acknowledged. So much in Drydenne isn't, it's like pulling teeth to get anyone to talk about anything here. I'm going to try it myself, when I've saved enough money to look up for a hunting camp and see if I can't get some footage to comb through. Cate's house gives me the creeps. Her dad built it by hand, apparently. It seems like the grandiose gesture a middle aged man might make in the middle of a life crisis. It's fucking bizarre how many cases centre Drydenne, how many people just seemed to cease existing. What do the woods have to do with it? Why does it always circle back around to the birds? Are they even birds? The twins insist that they are, but "slightly to the left." What is something like that even supposed to mean? To the left of what? And what am I not able to see, that dad and Irene and Felix can? Why does Irene have those flickered

up visions? I was thinking of asking
Andersen, to see if there's a particular
ward or sign that might shed some light
on that situation. I was thinking of
getting FIRE tattooed next, or LIGHT
it'd be something useful, especially if I'm
going to keep going into the caves. Eventually
it's got to run out of rats, right? It's not
like they're any sort of proper animal.
They used to be people for fuck's sake,
but I've never seen people that look like
that, personally. When the tunnels are
decided out, maybe then we can finally
get to the bottom of all of it. It's
too risky to set fire to the place. I don't
actually know if they can leave the
cave system, and they just choose not to,
but something tells me that the last
thing we need is for the sub-ground
level shit to leak into the boundary
of the woods. There is something
profoundly wrong with both of those
places. It's nowhere someone should be.

Michael died down there. I wonder if that
keeps him up at night. Catie's dad seems
so sad, all of the time he was happy,
once. In the family albums, he smiles
a lot, laughs a lot. His poetry from then
was different, too. It resonated different.
Maybe it's not just the not knowing that
drives me crazy, it's the fact that Joshua
and him go looking every year. What are
they even hoping to find? The caves are
way too humid for anything to mummify.
I guess it's conceivable that if it fell into
one of the watery portions of the cave
it might still be mostly together, instead of
picked clean and scattered apart. But why? Curse?

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Sure, he's always been kind of reclusive,
but personally, I can't buy the excuse
that he's just been in a depressive funk.
I've never seen him like this, just clustered
up in the backroom of the church. That's
not normal. The guy needs to go see a
doctor or something, if he's doing that
awfully - for Catie's sake, and his own. I
haven't seen him myself. Father Alexander
seems cagey about letting anyone but her
back there. And the cat, I guess. What
does he not want us to see? What won't
Catie tell me about this whole damn mess?

That's another thing that really bothers me
too. I'm not exactly well travelled, but
I know that at the very least most
places don't run like how the local outfit
does. It's just bizarre. Like off-brance Roman
Catholicism. Sort of the same dissonance
between the letter, and the spirit of the law.

I can see why there's so many rumors about
him looking an awful lot like death. He wears
all black suits, ALL of the time. There's
something deeply disturbing about how he
looks when he's alone in the church. I
broke in, because I was doing a late
night run on clearing out some of the covered
trash. With the weather warming up, they've gotten
a lot more active, as of late. It can't think
he saw me. I'm pretty damn light on my
feet when I want to be, and it's a hard
habit to shake after silently slinking around
the caves in the first place. My hands are
always so damn clammy after the fact. He was
sitting in the dark, hands folded in his lap
like it wasn't anything weird to be sitting
around and staring off into nothing. I saw

what I think was the edge of a ouija board. He wasn't actively trying to use it, at least not as far as I could tell. He was just holding the planchette in an absent-minded sort of way, like you might twiddle a guitar pick in your hands or mime playing if you were bored and noodling around a bit.

Now tell me, what the hell does a priest have anything to do with communing with the dead? He's an exorcist, he's THE exorcist for the area. He should absolutely know better than to do that. On hallowed ground, too? The board shouldn't have worked if the site was truly holy. I really don't like where that leaves us.

I really don't know what to do. It just doesn't make any sense. He's a priest, and an exorcist, and a model fucking citizen. Aren't we supposed to be able to take some things for granted - that at least the fucking clergy hasn't taken it upon themselves to con and fleece the town too?

And if he isn't who he says he is, then who is he? Is he even licensed - does he even know what the hell he's doing? Cattie's no help, here - she barely leaves the goddamn house, and as much as I love her, she's way too afraid to question anything of her own accord.

This whole town is pretty much brainwashed, when you come to think about it. No one questions why things are the way they are. They just abide to the script, whether it's faith, or just not asking questions about what IS IT that they see: no one steps out of line. Why?

I don't trust him. Maybe it's partially because I don't trust anyone with that level of power or control in general, or his creepy tendency to act like he's on so warm and welcome to -my- house, or how he smiles in that glazed over way that is so hollow than that and how he keeps trying to convince me and Joshua to attend services beyond the big few - and really, that's more to keep up appearances more so than anything, because literally everyone and their goddamn mother clings to the holy books like it'd do anything in the face of the hellspawn that haunts the caves and woods.

His shadow wasn't right. That's a ridiculous thing to claim, and arguably the weird candle lit quality to the place doesn't help how much time does he spend on scraping wax off of the walls, anyways? It's got to be something ridiculous. But the way that it sat, it looked firm, gauze-like, sort of too transparent, like it was cling wrap or something. Sparkly cling wrap. I couldn't make this shit up if I tried to, seriously.

I know a thing or two about danger. I know when to rely on my gut instinct, and when something is screaming for you to leave now, before it's too late too. I felt that, when I was standing there. I didn't throw the trash out. I took the damn bag back to the mines. It's not safe to leave lying around just anywhere and I didn't want him to know that I'd been there. I didn't want him to know that I'd witnessed him, whatever the hell he is.